The Crisis of Comparative Literature

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This book is as an unassuming as it is impressive. Packed with information on the provenance and development of a modern critical field, the book aims no higher than what its title suggests but manages in the process to cover almost the entire stretch of the history of comparative literature in the non-Arabic- speaking world. The self-imposed limitation in space has unwittingly helped the scholar to juxtapose the various approaches to comparative literature, east and west, with a focus on *conflict* rather than *compromise*. In fact, some of the approaches initially rejected in the modern era of comparative literature as ethnocentric or as suggesting ethnic superiority, such as those based on 'influence' in its varied forms, have surfaced yet again and seem to thrive in practice – their ethnocentricity being reversed; some nations of the third world deliberately seek to show that it was their literature that has influenced the literature of the developed world. It is an approach which, fraught with severely academic dangers, seems inevitable.

One is naturally inclined to assume a measure of influence once a similarity in technical or thematic handling is perceived in two works of art belonging to two *different* literary traditions, or to the *same* literary tradition, though the imponderables are in fact greater than the factors justifying such 'influence.' My discussion

of the subliminal 'influences' of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* on my own *A Spy in the Sultan's Palace* (cf. *The Comparative Tone*, Cairo, 1995) may be impossible to prove, but I made a comparison between two remarkably similar situations and did suggest such an influence. With the Indians trying today to show that it was their tradition that influenced many European literary forms, a new lease of life has been given to the concept of influence, though nobody seems to complain of ethnocentricity. However impossible to prove, the concept of influence will be difficult to dislodge from the actual practice of any 'modern' comparative literature scholar. Whether or not characteristic of the so-called French school, literary works do influence one another, and, though the tendency in this 'globalized' era is to attribute no 'superiority' to the literature of one nation over any other, certain works of art are 'influenced' by others, and, as happens within the literary tradition of a given country or language, 'border-crossing' influences can easily be perceived and studied. Few would deny today that there are Shakespearean influences in Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, and in Coleridge's *The Fall of Robespierre*, though how these 'influences' appear in the actual texts have not been thought important enough to warrant an independent study. For there are other influences, too, in both plays, some of which easily traceable to eighteenth-century dramatic forms and traditions, often glossed as insignificant though they play a central role in disting-

uishing 'romantic' drama from the strictly Shakespearean canon.

Can we deny, to take another example near at home, that it was the tradition of modern Euro-American poetry that 'influenced' the 'new' Arabic poetry of the post-war period in Egypt, Iraq and Syria? For all the differences between French and English on the one hand and Arabic on the other, rhythmical, verbal and thematic echoes are easily discernible. Salah Abdul-Saboor, Ahamad Hijazi (Egypt) Badr Shakir El-Sayyab, Nazik Al-Mala'ika (Iraq) and Nizar Qabbani (Syria) had no qualms about echoing major Afro-American and French Poets, sometimes to the point of direct 'imitation.' Sometimes their work seems too redolent of certain foreign themes and images as to leave no doubt that such an influence was in play: the general attitudes and tones may be, as I have shown in my introduction to the *Anthology of the New Arabic Poetry in Egypt* (1986) definitely closer to the romantic work of the early nineteenth century in England, but the way the themes are handled and the very rhythms, in spite of the language difference, are reminiscent of the Euro-American models. No complete study of modern Arabic poetry, in fact, can be made (or fruitfully made) without tracing the influences of those Euro-American models.

The problem with the concept of influence is, of course, one of methodology. Everything in this area

seems to be tentative, and even contestable. The mere observation of similarities is never enough to conclude, with any certainty, that there has been an influence; still, when one encounters direct 'borrowings,' or 'imitations' (deliberate or otherwise) one can safely assume prior knowledge by the poet of 'foreign' models. The birth of Arabic drama, properly so called, in Ahmad Shawqi in the 1920s, however variously interpreted, must be seen as owing a great deal to the cult of the 'musical' and the many translations of European theatrical pieces (some of which were 'adopted' and in the process drastically changed) at the turn of the century. Early translations of Shakespeare had introduced and won recognition for verse drama as a literary genre worthy of the deepest respect. Shawqi's *The Madman of Leila* (beautifully done into English by J. Atiyyah as *Qais and Leila*) may be too different from *Romeo and Juliet* to warrant a study of 'direct influence;' and Shawqi's *The Death of Cleopatra* (again translated by J. Atiyyah) may not be comparable to Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra*; but the fact that Shawqi thought that 'love' could be a fit subject for 'serious' literary handling, that he had to pick a theme from *history*, and even that poetic drama was a recognizable form of literature, all point to European influences. The methodological problems facing the scholar should not invalidate the concept of influence, as such; and 'influence' is here to stay.

The concept of 'placing,' brought in to *displace* influence, may involve less methodological problems; but the process of 'placing' itself (or juxtaposition for the sake of comparison) brings in, in turn, the *rationale* for such a placing in the first place. To say that there are links between the two works (or more) being 'placed' beside one another is to advance a critical commonplace; for at a certain level of human experience there will always be *links* connecting works of art to one another. And the deeper the level at which the analysis is made the more the links one is bound to 'discover.' There are universal themes which are or seem to be the property of all artists and writers, and such themes reveal themselves in images and techniques sometimes thought to be unconnected with the 'matter' handled; and whatever the methodology chosen or adopted in the 'placing' of two or more works for 'comparison,' the outcome will, or should, deliver little more than cultural differences—or similarities. Would that be the ultimate goal of the work of the critic or scholar? Cultural differences *and* similarities are almost a 'given,' and the 'discovery' that cosmic imagery means substantially the same to all poets at all times, with slight variations due to cultural differences (what C. Day-Lewis calls 'consecrated images' in *The Poetic Image*) may not be worth the effort made by the scholar. On the other hand, a discovery that images of the desert in the Arabic tradition may be equivalent to images of the sea in the Western tradition, such as that made by W. H. Auden in his *The Enchaféd Flood*, may tell us more about cultural

differences than about the poems in which they occur. Would the establishment of the links of a given culture or a given cultural-literary tradition be the sole aim of the 'comparatist'? Obviously not, and the scholar has to ask himself or herself more pertinent questions about how such cultural components are worked out in the particular work of art studied; and it is the employment of such cultural components that should be of interest to the serious critic(and scholar) rather than the mere observation that they are *there.* If, say, a dominant 'sea' image determines the inner 'pattern of images' (though not of the 'sea' directly) would that not be more significant than the fact that there are a number of 'sea' images in another poem? A student of comparative literature may have thus to master the art of reading a poem, or a work of fiction, *as a work of art*, rather than establish the cultural affiliation of 'given' images, themes or techniques.

It is these difficulties which compel any serious scholar to consider other than purely cultural factors in undertaking comparisons in accordance with the simple process of 'placing.' In fact, the deeper one probes this issue, the more difficult will be the methodological questions. Take translation as an exercise in comparative literature: is it only the interculturality aspect of the translated work that should engage the critic's or the scholar's attention? Of course there is a great deal of interculturality in any work of translation, and, of course,

it should never be overlooked in any serious study; but perhaps more important is the role assigned by the translator to it, and, which is equally important, to the role of the 'implied reader' as established by the modern methods used in 'reader-response criticism.' As a 'new' work of art, the translated text will speak to a different audience, using a different system of 'codes' for the reader to decode, and may, perhaps, produce a different response, not only from the original work (which is self-evident) but also from the one 'expected' by the translator. As 'another' author (definitely the 'author' of the translation) he or she will be or *should* be responsible for the 'new' text which, if successful, will be related only 'reactively,' as Edward Said would have it, to the 'source text.' In other words, the target text will be one of many possible versions of the source text in another language, and this new version can be fruitfully *compared* not only with the source text but also with other versions, whether produced within the same cultural tradition or not. If the same cultural situation obtains, the differences and similarities may be safely attributed to the 'original' contribution of the 'new' author (the translator); if not, then, cultural factors should be taken into account, even if they do not determine the 'final' effect.

It is amazing that *translation studies*, that new discipline born and bred in the last decades of the twentieth century, had its origins in Comparative Literature. I have had the chance to speak more fully

about this elsewhere; all I should like to say here is that the two disciplines are still linked up internally: even the teaching of a foreign text (in our case English or French mainly) to Arabic speaking students must involve a certain amount of comparisons because it involves a great deal of translation (as I have shown elsewhere).

So vast is the field of comparative literature, and so different are the perspectives from which it can be viewed, that only general remarks may be offered; but professor Hussein has bearded the lion, as they say, and has achieved a remarkable degree of success in presenting a compendious summary of the different 'theories' and the schools behind them. He has not made the mistake, common enough in recent scholarship on the subject in our foreign language departments, of confining himself to foreign sources; he has, instead, shown commendable awareness of the work done by Arabists and by Arab scholars of comparative literature and so proceeded to produce a near-complete picture of the field at this time. Such condensation has its dangers, of course, but then the student may make use of longer and fuller discussions of specific points in other books, both in Arabic and in English. It is with pleasure and pride that I recommend this little book to students of comparative literature everywhere in the Arab world.

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Cairo, 2005

I

The Crisis of Comparative Literature

Litterature Comparée, the French term for 'Comparative Literature,' first emerged in France around the beginning of the nineteenth century and has been a controversial field from the word go. Susan Bassnett contends that most of the scholars who have travelled "towards it from different points of departure" have not come to meet at a definite point. (1) This has given rise to numerous contrasting perspectives. In short, critics have not arrived at a fixed norm but rather are working towards enriching literary comparison through the creation of fresh and more developed theories.

Confined in this paper to focusing on the theories of comparative literature, one needs not refer the reader to the countless literary comparisons that preceded the subject's first nomenclature, which (along with the myriad arguments about the dates of the term's coming on the surface, its identification, methodology, boundaries and goals within the nineteenth and early years of the twentieth century) (2) should have in itself attracted many scholars to this field of study. It should be borne in mind, however, that even recent approaches to the subject, as Bassnett states, go "right back to the earliest usage of" it. (3) In short, all approaches tend to enclose the subject within narrow problematic bounds, namely the 'politiciz-

ation of literature' and manipulation of the comparatists, in M. Shafiq's phrase, to show "a stubborn national tendency." (4)

Not to belittle the theory (like René Wellek's in 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature', an essay published in *Concepts of Criticism* in 1963) that systematizing the models of comparative literature into individualistic national schools exacerbates a tendency towards 'chauvinistic nationalism', one feels bound to consider separately the landmarks of each of the presumed schools, with a view to identifying the phases of development in the theory of comparative literature.

II

The French School

The founding fathers of this school define 'comparative literature' as a branch of literary study which traces the mutual relations between two or more internationally and linguistically different literatures or texts. [5] Insofar as relations between nations have some historical roots, literary comparative studies are linked to history. It is on this basis that Jean Marie Carré comes to propose in his foreword to Marius Francois Guyard's book *La Litterature Comparée* that "comparative literature is a branch of literary history, for it tackles the international spiritual affinities." [6] As these perspectives place a strong emphasis on geographical and linguistic boundaries in the comparison, they (elusively, however, by the use of 'international' as a keyword) show a national propensity.

Inasmuch as it is colored by the *'études binaires*' (binary studies), this approach complicates matters by stating that comparative literary study should take place between specific 'individuals.' [7] It means that 'anonymous', 'folkloric' and 'collective' works, even if well-known and accepted, are excluded from the province of comparative literature, for no other reason than their being oral and 'impersonal.' [8]

If the French approach lacks in determination of method, the French theorists themselves are to blame for not being able to reach an idealistic methodology of comparative literature. It is Tieghem who makes a rigid sharp distinction between so-called 'general literature' (to him, all research underlying the common properties of a number of literatures, be it reciprocal relation or congruency) and 'comparative literature' (the study of two entities: two books or writers, two groups of books or writers, or two complete literatures). [(9)] His attempt to have this concept of 'general literature' circulated in Europe came to naught. Not to mention its illegitimacy and erroneousness, the concept, as seen by H. Remak, makes the already indistinct definition of 'comparative literature' much more blurred. Remak maintains that 'general' and 'comparative' literature are inseparable, for the two (as defined by Tieghem) rely on one method. Even Guyard, a notable founder of the French School, comes to agree with the American critic Remak that Tieghem's 'general' and 'comparative' literature fall into the same category of meaning. Remak agrees that Tieghem's concept gives wider scope to 'general literature' than 'national' and 'comparative' literature: instead of confining themselves to two European literatures (French and English or German), the devotees of the French School are invited to bring more literatures from inside and outside Europe into the zone of their comparative studies. [(10)]

Despite its post-war popularity in most parts of the world, the French School, to borrow M. Shafiq's phrase, "has come to an impasse" for many reasons. [11] First of all, the French theorists have failed clearly to define the terminology and methodology of 'comparative literature.' These theorists have busied themselves with outside impacts on the literary work such as the 'causality' of relations between literary works, while ignoring the internal aspects of the texts in question. Hence, 'comparative literature' (defined by M. Wahba and several others as a 'branch of literary study') [12] is tied to nineteenth-century 'positivism' ("A system of philosophy elaborated by Auguste Comte [1798-1857], holding that man can have no knowledge of anything but actual phenomena and facts and their interrelations, rejecting all speculations concerning ultimate origins or causes"). [13] This makes 'comparative literature' lose touch with other critical or aesthetic approaches. Another good reason is that no credit can be given to a comparative study based upon linguistic differences only, leaving out the factor of culture, though language and culture are intermingled. [14] It is more accurate, therefore, that a comparison should take place between literatures in a single language, inasmuch as they are products of different cultural contexts – a hypothesis which the American scholars have adopted as one of the bases of their so-called 'American School of comparative literature,' which will be discussed below, after an examination of the French School's most common fields of study.

The Concept of Influence:

There is general agreement that the 'influence' study (basic for the French School of comparative literature) is a very knotty question, for it takes various forms which comparatists sometimes misuse due to a failure to distinguish between one form and another. There are many arguments surrounding the term 'influence', but one can define it simply as the movement (in a conscious or unconscious way) of an idea, a theme, an image, a literary tradition or even a tone from a literary text into another. But scholars do not stop here; rather, they classify influence into distinct types as follows.

(a) 'Literary' and 'Non-literary' Influence:

The concept of 'literary influence' originated in the type of comparative study that seeks to trace the mutual relation between two or more literary works. This sort of study is the touchstone of the French comparative literature. Hence, a comparative study between B. Shaw's *Pygmalion* and that of Tawfiq Al-Hakeem, or between Arabic and Persian poetry, for example, is a good example of 'literary influence'; while a comparative study between Rifa'at Al-Tahtawi and French culture is based

on the principle of 'non-literary influence,' even though culture is related at some level to literature. The latter is ignored by the French School on the ground that the influenced writer ('receiver') does not absorb certain constituents of a literary work into his or her own work but rather some primary material which he or she dexterously reshapes into a literary work. [15]

(b) 'Direct' and 'Indirect' Influence:

A 'direct influence' between two literatures, beyond the boundaries of place and language, is marked when there is an actual contact between writers. More specifically, a literary text can have no existence before its writer's reading of another writer's 'original' text or having direct contact with him or her. It is difficult, not to say impossible, however, to prove this relation, resting basically on a clear-cut causality, between nationally different writers; [16] especially, when some writers do not mention (deliberately or unconsciously) their debt, if such exists, to certain foreign writers or texts. Shakespeare's plays, for example, are derived from a number of older texts (history, biographies of notable persons or folkloric tales), but it would be inaccurate to suggest that such materials are behind his peculiar genius, because they were only the raw material that he reshaped into new forms with his genius. Shakespeare's drawing upon any preceding sources is thus irrelevant to the concept of 'direct influence,' but closely pertains to the concept of

'creativity' in the Middle Ages in Europe, which was gauged by a writer's utilization of certain literary devices (rhetorical or stylistical modes) to create out of an overworked subject a new literary source that appeals to the reading public. (17)

The comparatists interested in emphasizing the direct influence between different writers are in this way obliged to obtain documentary information verifying an actual relation between them, such as personal contacts or letters. Though their job is difficult, these comparatists do not enrich their national literatures with new literary models (patterns of thought, technique or types of personae... etc.) as much as they accelerate a tendency towards a blind chauvinistic 'national-ism,' where each critic makes a statistical list of the works manifesting the superiority of his national literatures to foreign ones.

In many cases influence can exist between two different writers, without there being any direct relation between them because of the language barrier, but rather through specific intermediaries such as individuals, journals or periodicals of literary criticism, saloons or societies of literature, and translations. If there is any influence of this sort, the French comparatists take it to be 'indirect.' Some individuals happen to visit and stay temporarily in foreign countries and become conversant with some of their literary works, which they propagate at home after coming back. An example is Mme de Stael's

De L'Allemagne (1810, and was published in Britain in 1813), a book about Germany she wrote while staying there, which acquainted the French people with the German literature of the time. (18) Translation plays a no less effective role in importing information to peoples of the world about each other's literature.

It is noteworthy, however, that translation is often referred to as a complicated and deceptive process: inasmuch as it may provide national literatures with fresh themes or techniques, it may also distort the original texts. Owing to the deep influence of national matrices of language, culture and politics, many scholars fail to give, consciously or unconsciously, accurate translations of foreign texts. This results in the danger of the appearance of entirely different texts from the originals, which consequently leads to what critics describe as 'a false influence,' as the writer influenced by such translated works is misguided. (19) In many cases the translated texts can put people off the originals. Charles Pierre Baudelaire's translation of Poe's stories into French and several other English translations are clear examples. (20) A 'false influence' can be uncovered when a writer is influenced by another from his own country, whom he believes to be influenced by foreign texts; whereas if this writer went to the source he might find quite different elements. An example to examine is the influence on Mikhail Yurievich Lermontov of Alexander Pushkin's Byronic poetic narratives, but as he came to consult Lord

Byron's original texts he could absorb from them many valuable artistic aspects, which Pushkin could not, into his own works – aspects which contributed to the development of Russian literature. (21)

'Influence study' now seems a difficult task, as it requires comparatists to be well versed in different languages, cultures and literary histories in order to come up with sound conclusions. It is rendered more complex by the insistence of the French comparatists on processes such as 'borrowing', 'imitation' and 'reception.' Both Tieghem and Guyard concur that the study of a writer's impact on a foreign country cannot be divorced from studying the 'reception' of this writer's works in that country to a degree at which it becomes impossible to distinguish between 'reception' and 'influence.' (22) J. M. Carré also maintains that 'influence' study stresses the need to examine the reception of foreign works in a national country. Hence, he takes 'reception' to be a synonym for 'influence.' (23) And as the reception of a work in a foreign country subjects certain parts of it to 'borrowing' and 'imitation' on the part of some national writers, which are clear signs that 'influence' takes place, it seems that the three processes are bound together. But many critics see that the 'influence' process must not be mixed with the other processes, as is shown below.

The Concept of Reception:

There is a sharp line of demarcation between the process of 'influence' and 'reception', though the two are not unrelated: no influence can take place between foreign writers without the reception of a literary work outside its national borders. That is, 'reception' can be taken as a step on the road to 'influence.' But the reception of a foreign work in a nation does not necessarily mean that it is a good sign of 'positive influence': this would require proof that the foreign work helped develop in another country a foreign work within its national literature. In some cases a country's reception of foreign works helps only in letting its people know more about other cultures, as reflected in such works. This is why Zhirmunsky, along with other Russian scholars, sees that the process of 'reception' is not coincidental or mechanical but rather systematic, as it takes place only when the foreign works bring in cultural and ideological modes that accord with or help evolve those of a nation. (24) To give but one example, Fitzgerald's English translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* would not be given so much attention in the west unless it fulfilled a need for Khayyam's new trends of pessimism and mysticism. (25) On the contrary, the Arabic translations of certain Greek works during the Renaissance were not celebrated much in the Oriental world, containing as they did social and religious concepts that were inconsistent with its Islamic and Christian culture.

The Concept of 'Imitation' and 'Borrowing':

Ulrich Veisstein recognizes that though 'influence' and 'imitation' or 'borrowing' are related, they are drastically divergent in meaning. 'Influence' goes beyond the process of adopting certain aspects of a foreign literary work, and can manifest itself in a writer's imitation of this work in a way which suits the taste of his countrymen and proves his creative ability. The latter, Veisstein maintains, should not necessarily be seen as a refurbishing of specific foreign forms or themes, but as a creation of new concepts and contents originating from the foreign ones. [(26)] It seems then that aspects of foreign influence are embedded within the text, and to analyze them one must analyze carefully the whole text and consider the process of influence (starting with the literal translation of the foreign text through the imitation and borrowing processes). But pure 'imitation' in itself is a conscious process of adopting certain parts of a foreign work through which the imitator gives no room for the presentation of his creative ability in his text.

The 'borrowing' process is a ramification of 'imitation', in its broad sense, which ranges from the refashioning of the best parts of a foreign work in a way that fits well the national public taste to the adoption of a particular foreign style or technique. Pushkin's adaptation of Byron's elegy to the Russian style, and Pound's

reshaping of the Russian old models of poetry are good illustrative examples. [27] There is a marked difference, however, between 'imitation' and 'borrowing': in the case of borrowing (especially from a work written in a foreign language) the writer, like the translator, is bound by the original text, whereas in the case of imitation he is not.

Still, there is a thin line of demarcation that should not be broken between imitation and borrowing as forms of artistic creativity (which adds new literary and technical modes to the influenced literature) and as 'plagiarism' (which is the borrowing from foreign works without referring to the sources or areas of citation). This last process, of course, has always been disapproved of [28].

'Positive' and 'Passive' Influence:

A national writer's use of specific foreign literary sources in creating successful works of his own simply means that these sources have a 'positive' influence upon him. In other words, according to Aldridge, the existence of something in a writer's work is contingent upon his reading of another writer's work. [29] Examples of this sort of influence have been mentioned so far in discussing the complex process of reception. Some foreign works may have a 'passive' influence upon a national writer, in that he may feel compelled to write in a reaction to an affront to highly revered national figures in foreign literature. For

example, S. Daniel's *Cleopatra* (1594), Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* (1606-7), La Chapelle's *La Mort de Cléopâtre* (1680, A. Sommet's *Cleopatra* (1824), Mme de Gérardin's *Cléopâtre* (1847), Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1912) and other plays, all belittled the Oriental mentality through portraying Cleopatra, an ancient Egyptian queen, as a two-faced siren who won victory for her country by seducing Anthony and other western military leaders. Conversely, Ahmed Shawqi's portrayal of Cleopatra manifested her as a striking example of loyalty and self-sacrifice for the sake of her country's welfare and dignity. (30)

No literature can stand alone on its own nation's cultural and literary heritage; rather, it must transcend geographical and linguistic borders to give and take (a technique, a theme, an idea or a human model) from different literatures of the world. This inevitable mutual sharing between international literatures is another essential area of study in French 'comparative literature.' Its fields of study are the following:

(1) Literary Schools and Genres:

From the 18th century until now, the world has witnessed the emergence of various literary schools or movements (Classicism, Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Symbolism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Modernism, Post-modernism) and genres (epic, novel and drama). It is

hardly a coincidence that such literary forms and schools are found, in one way or another, in the literatures of different parts of the world: there must have been a connection between them. Romanticism, for example, was brought to Germany through Schiller, to England through Shelley, to France through Hugo, and to Russia through Pushkin within the 19th century; but it appeared in the Arab world through a group of poets in the first half of the twentieth century. (31) Like animal geneses, these schools and genres (as shown by Brunetiére's *L'évolution des Genres*, based on Darwin's theory) have undergone basic changes and evolutions; and some of them have decayed. There is no place in today's literature for classicism, with its rigid artistic formulae, as is the case with the historical novel (which inundated Europe till the middle of the late century); when they first appeared, epic and drama were confined to using verse, but in time they tended to use both verse and prose, and then prose only.

Accordingly, comparatists interested in this field of study should base their studies on raising and answering a number of questions such as: what are the similitudes and dissimilitudes between two international literatures in using a specific school or genre? Where and when did this school or genre first appear? And how did it find its way into other literatures? What was behind its change or evolution? Did the boundaries of language, place and time have to do with this? Besides, many other questions can be put forth and answered.

Despite its large scope, this area of study in comparative study has not been scrutinized. J. W. Goethe's *West Östlicher Divan* (1819); L.R. Furst's *Romanticism in Perspective*: *A Comparative Study of the Romantic Movements in England, France and Germany* (1960); and *Islamic and Arab Contribution to the European Renaissance* (1977) by the National Commission For UNESCO in Egypt, are among the most significant studies on the history and development of various literary schools and genres in Western and Oriental countries.

(2) Ideological Echoes:

According to Tieghem, the ideological history of a nation is generally formed by the history of philosophy, religion, ethics, culture and politics. This ideological history cannot be divorced from literary history, as the spread of any ideology outside national borders depends upon the artistic method of expressing it, as represented in the works of such French philosophical writers as Montesquieu (1689-1778), Voltaire (1694-78) and Rousseau (1712-78). These philosophical writers and many others are proper candidates for comparative literature studies.

Literature harbors all kinds of ideas, which are viewed differently by different writers. Religious ideas in,

for example, French literature are treated in various ways: some writers defend religion or certain doctrines, while others question them. Cálvin, Pascal, Rousseau, Montaigne, Fénelon and Chateaubriand are among the theological writers whose distinguished works have found their wide echoes outside the frontiers of France.

As for philosophical ideas, not all of them are reflected in literature, but the ones that can be taken as seeds for ethical, social or literary concepts. A great deal of the philosophy of Hegel and Locke have found their way into many of the European literary works. Still, philosophical ideas are not the same in various literary forms, but are modified in a way that serves the writer's literary goal. German Existentialism, for instance, would not have gained popularity in France, if Sartre had not prepared the French public's taste with his novels and plays. Similarly, Al-Gähiz and Ibn El-Muqaffa must have exerted a strenuous effort in assimilating some of the foreign philosophical ideas (as of India, Persia and Greece) and introducing them into Arab culture in some works. [32]

Much more attention has been directed by comparatists towards ethical ideas in literature than to theological or philosophical ideas, in that they are closely related to literature (with all its forms, substance and essence). Ethical ideas embrace the writer's view of man (his nature and destiny in this world or the other) and the

critical views which evaluate his actions and dictate how he should behave within definite social and ethical norms. These theoretical and practical rules of the writer are bound together in their literary expression.

It is hardly difficult to notice that ethical ideas have been the raw material for the masterpieces of world writers such as Addison, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Pope, Voltaire, Pushkin, Petrarch and Byron. The mutual influence between these writers, and many others, has been considered by a number of comparatists, like J. Texte (1865-1900) and Paul Hazard (1878-1944). Still, the works of Texte and Hazard are not regarded as 'comparative literature' but 'general literature' studies, inasmuch as they pursue the literary and ideological history of all European countries within a century or two, whereas the French School is characterized by binary study. Hence, Voltaire's imitation of Pope's view of man's dual nature, or mysticism in Arabic and Persian literature, or 'existentialism' in German and French literature, for example, all are proper provinces for comparative literature studies. (33)

Any treatise on 'comparative literature' may come to effective conclusions if it examines the role of other ideas (say, political, scientific or aesthetic) in the growth of literature – ideas which, of course, are echoed in most world literatures. Many of the theories of natural and social sciences are reflected in certain works by Zola; the

19th century literary decadents (a group of French and English writers who adopted the theory of 'art for art's sake) can be traced back to the multifarious analyses of psychotherapy; and even the most recent scientific discoveries are represented at length in modern literature. The political ideas in the masterpieces of Plato, Bacon, Vico, Hegel and Marx have been imitated by countless European writers, who must have affected many writers outside Europe. As for aesthetic ideas, they have been already referred to in discussing literary schools and genres, whose use in modern literature is attributed to Aristotle. (34) It seems now that the comparatist's job of studying the history of ideas and their participation in laying the bases of many literary texts is very complicated - a job which should shed some light on the history of two different cultures and the reasons behind their mutual literary contact.

(3) Image Echoes:

The treatise on 'image' in comparative literature has two main points of departure. First, a country's image in a foreign writer's work (e.g., Twain's portrayal of Egypt, along with some other Arab countries, in *The Innocents Abroad* or Voltaire's image of the English people) or literature (Spain in Arabic literature or Germany in French literature). Second, the image of a certain type of common character or of an object (woman in Arabic and

Persian literature, or nature in English and French literature).

The image of a country in foreign literatures, in travel books or literary texts through using 'foreign' personae or local colour, is widespread in both national and comparative literature. Pierre Reboul's *Le Mythe Anglais dans la Litterature Francaise sous la Restauration* (The English Myth in French Literature: The Restoration Period) outlines English characters in French literature between 1815 and 1830, who seem to be characterized by independent thinking, duality, love of freedom and a commanding temperament. But this image underwent basic changes in later writings. In 1813 Mme de Stael introduced the French people to a picture of a deteriorating Germany (displaying a dull romantic spirit and a sharp division into principalities, kingdoms and Duchies). Owing to the social evolution of Germany in the late 19th century, Wagner depicted it as a united republic and a luminous center of knowledge and culture. On the contrary, Bismark saw it as martial and dictatorial. These inconsistent views, however, could not sweep from the French mind the picture of Germany as a home of the erudite physician, the romantic poet and the favored musician. The *Mercure de France* (a French journal published in 1924) presented an ideal picture of the Roman citizen (known for his generosity, love of nature and deep reverence for the past). The accounts of some French travellers and translated Roman works into French

were primary sources for this view. However, this idealistic picture later underwent a change: some French writers looked upon the Roman ideal as foolhardy, opulent and showy. Inasmuch as this last view contradicted the Roman identity as shown throughout Roman history, it was regarded as inaccurate.

With an equal degree of interest, several scholars pursued the depiction of France in other European literatures (of England, Germany, Italy, Spain, etc.), as appeared in *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples*. Some Munich University professors also drew an analogy between the image of France in German literature and that of Germany in French literature.(35)

It is obvious now that a country's image in a foreign literature rests upon different, often contradictory, points of view. Depending on sources irrelevant to literature (journals, periodicals or newspapers) and viewing a people through stereotypes may lie behind such contradictory views. In order to ensure accurate and authentic images of countries, the comparatist is required to examine all the literary works portraying a country and the writers' biographies, so as to make sure whether or not they visited this country. It is preferable, though difficult, that the comparatist himself visit the country and get acquainted with its people and culture to be able to compare its literary image with its reality. Good judgment is an essential prerequisite, to detect truth or falsification

of literary images of a place. This sort of study, after all, becomes most difficult when the lines of distinction between mythical and real are broken and when it becomes impossible to trace the sources of a country's image printed in the minds of a foreign people. [36]

As for the second dimension of 'image' (which is the representation of a type of character or an object in more than one literature), it demands of the comparatist to base his study on two things. In the first place, he or she needs to look for the cultural, social or political communication between two different nations some of whose literary works focus on a certain type of character or an object. In the second place, the role of geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries in modeling the same type of character or object in a similar or different manner should not be ignored.

As a figure of speech (like the symbol of nature as divine power or as a kind mother who gives solace to her children during sorrow and distress times), 'image' has crept into all poetry, drama and novel (as is the case with the French and English romantic poets). It is most significant if the comparatist can determine the origin of an image or a group of images in the works of a writer and their imitation by others. Since foreign images are assimilated by writers into their national languages and cultures, the comparatist is bound to refer to this process. The transmission of Arabic poetry, with all its images,

through 'intricate historical circumstances' to Spain, Sicily and south-west France during the Renaissance period may be a prolific province for comparative literature studies. (37)

(4) Verbal Echoes:

Subsequent comparative studies have been fastened on the 'give' and 'take' between languages, with regard to the various channels of connection between nations. These studies reached contradictory conclusions as to the words and idioms which crept from the borders of one language into the other's. But what matters most is the discovery that foreign words go beyond being mere sources of enrichment for the legacy of the receiving language that has received them; they become indicative of definite social and cultural values with many connotations. It is reasonable to suggest that languages, despite their variation, are the cornerstones of cultural and social reciprocity between nations.

Mackenzie, an English researcher, has thoroughly examined the relations between England and France in the light of the words each one borrowed from the other's linguistic legacy. Most fruitful is the role of the Orientalists in revealing the impact of foreign languages on Arabic, and vice-versa - an impact which throws light upon various ancient relations (historical, political, commercial, scientific, literary, etc.). Some examples of

the many comparative studies made in this field: Siegmond Fidenkel, *Die Aramaischen Fremdworder im Arabischen*, Leiden, 1886 (Aramaic Words in the Arabic Language); Lyde, *Glossaire des mots Espagnols*, *Portugais Dérivés de l' Arabie*, 1869 (A Glossary of Spanish and Portuguese Words Derived from the Arabic Language); Heinrich Leroy, *Die Semitischen Fremdworder im Griech-ichen*, Berlin, 1895 (Semitic Words in the Greek Language).[38]

Much more light has been thrown on the role of the Arabic words borrowed by other languages in widening international relations in the fields of mathematics, natural sciences, history, geography, oceanology, botany and medicine. For instance, *The Canon of Avicena*, a literary medical book ("ranking with the works of Aristotle, Euclid and Ptolemy") has always been a primary source for 'practitioners' of medicine in different parts of the world, and of which many of the terms have been adopted by various foreign languages. Countless Arabic astronomical terms have also found their way, with just a little change, in Western navigation books, such as: 'Achenar' (Akhir El-Nahr), 'Alkaid' (Al-Qa'id), 'Altair' (Al-Ta'ir), 'betelguese' (Bit Al-Gawza'), 'Centaurus' (centaurs), 'Mirfak' (Mirfaq), 'Famalhut' (Fam El-Hoot), 'Regal' (Regal)... etc. [39] In music, too, some of the names of musical instruments (such as *ud* for the English word 'lute') are still in common use all over the world.

Such studies may open new horizons for other ones which may come up with fresh ideas or concepts, so as to add to our knowledge of international relations across time and history. Still, it is not easy to achieve this, for verbal echoes study demands, besides vast knowledge of different international cultures, traditions, politics and histories, a great ability of testing these within certain linguistic contexts in two or more international literary texts, with a view to deciding the kind of historical relations between them. Such study can be easily drawn towards the orbit of both sociology and anthropology; the comparatist should not let the outside sources of the linguistic contexts seduce him away from the examination of the literary work itself.

(5) Human Models and Heroes:

That certain characters and heroes are used in eastern and western literatures (especially epic arts) is commonplace. There are characters attributed to ancient myths such as: Pygmalion (as in Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Ovid's *Les Metamorphosis* and John Marston's *The Metamorphoses of Pygmalion's Image*) and Prometheus (as in Geothe's unfinished play *Prometheus*, Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* and A. Gide's *Promethée Mal Enchaine*). Religion has provided all literatures with such figures as: Noah, Youssif (or Joseph), Moses, Solomon, the prophet Mohammed, Christ, Cain, Abel and the devil. The latter is depicted, for just one example, in "Paradise

Lost", Hugo's *Fall of the Devil*, M. Lermontov's dramatic poem "The Devil," Byron's Cain and in some works of Baudelaire and Arab writers. [40] Some of the characters, are, it is suggested, taken from popular myths, namely: Ala Edin and Shahrazad in *The Arabian Nights*; Faust in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* and several dramatic and poetic works of the Middle-Ages in Europe; and Don Juan in Tirso de Molina's play *El-Bortador de Sevilla y Convidada de Piedra*, Otto Renk's *Don Juan* and in some works of Baudelaire, Moliere, Byron, Goldoni, Mozart and Hoffmann. Other characters (like Alexander, Cleopatra, Arthur, Julius Caesar, etc.) are adopted by western and eastern writers from history. However, certain common types (say, the miser or the gambler) are ascribed to no definite originals but to daily life in general, therefore they are not focused upon in comparative literature. Instead, the focus has been on the worker, the inventor, the doctor, the naive girl, the harlot and many other common characters.

It is noteworthy that all the aforementioned types of characters vary from one literary text to the other. The imitators may have an excuse in Aristotle's definition of tragedy, which is the imitation of men in a way which makes them look better than we do; this is the method of painters, whose drawing of an original model results in producing a much more beautiful one, though the two may look identical. Like the painter, the poet creates out of bad or vicious people very idealistic human models. [41]

For example, Moliere's Don Juan is made to be a social satirist and a benevolent man altogether; Byron assigns Don Juan to convey his own philosophy: namely, detesting the haughtiness of society, its rigid and arbitrary traditions and calling for free love - a sacred love. In this Don Juan appears as a social victim and rebel. Some of the characters, however, do not deviate from their original outlines. Shahrazad, for example, figures in Arabic and western literatures as a symbol of the heart's triumph over mind.

The comparatists who want to work on this field of study in comparative literature are bound to trace how certain characters are sketched by two different literatures and the reasons beyond their consistency with, or deviation from, the original models. Still, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to come to clear-cut and accurate conclusions, when it is argued at length that the sources of specific characters are found in myth or folklore, or even created out of imagination and are made by writers to look real.

To conclude, the French comparatists have not restricted comparative literature study to the above fields: it has been of paramount importance for them to work on the popularity and influence of a writer or group of writers on the writings of foreign countries - a sort of study which Tieghem calls 'dexologia' (a Greek word for 'fame'). [42] Countless positive studies have been centered

on the contribution of the French writers (Rabelais, Ronsard, Montaigne, Moliere, Boileau, Fénelon, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Rousseau, Maupassant, Zola, etc.) in developing other European literatures, and the impact of the latter (like Richardson, Ossian, Byron, Shaw, Valery, Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Dante, Le Tasso, Pirandello, Goldoni, Lope de Vega, Dostoievski and Tolstoi) on French literature. Outside Europe, comparative studies have focused on the mutual influences between Arabic literature and European literatures. (43)

Despite its circulation inside and outside Europe within the early years of the twentieth century, the French School of comparative literature could not avoid criticism because of certain drawbacks. Tieghem, along with his followers, is impeached for drawing comparative literature away from its primary focus by involving it with problematic, though irrelevant, issues. To inquire thoroughly into 'rapports de fait' or outside circumstances affecting two or more literary texts makes the comparatist concentrate not on the texts but on extraneous factors. (44) In this way the subject remains bound by the old historical and 'positivistic methods of investigation. Another serious mistake is the confinement of comparison to the boundary of language and place between the texts, which draws us into Eurocentric view. Tieghem's differentiation between 'comparative' and 'general' literat-ure has caused the comparatists to differ often over, for example, "whether a study on the impact

of Ibsen on modernist drama can be properly traced to 'comparative' or 'general' literature." (45)

Inasmuch as these principles separate the external and internal constituents of a literary work, they come to contrast sharply with the new theories of literary criticism which flourished in the second half of the twentieth century and which are known for their consideration of the work of art as one integral whole. All these drawbacks must have given birth to the so-called American School of comparative literature.

III

The American School

The founding father of this school, which appeared in the second half of the twentieth century, Henry Remak, states that "comparative literature should not be regarded as a discipline on its own but rather as a connecting link between subjects or 'subject areas.' A comparison thus can be made between two or more different literatures and between literature and other fields of cognition (music, painting, sculpture, architecture, philosophy, sociology, psychology, religion, chemistry, mathematics, physics, etc)." [(46)] In this Remak leaves it all to the comparatist to lay the grounds for his or her study, which should not be involved in the problem of 'nationalism.' It is the 'depoliticization' of comparative study then which makes the American perspective on comparative literature different from the French one.

Though some critics claim that it is an offshoot of modernist literary criticism, the American perspective is actually a formulation of earlier definitions of the subject. In the 1890s Charles Mills tried to draw a distinctive line of American comparative literature (not differing much from the line drawn by Matthew Arnold, H. Macaulay Posnett and Arthur Marsh) by assuming that the subject "should be seen as 'nothing more or less' than literature philology..., by insisting on the importance of

psychology, anthropology, linguistics, social science, religion and art in the study of literature." (47)

Putting aside all the distinctions used by the French School, the American comparatists fastened their attention on constructing a model of an 'interdisciplinary work.' The sole aim beyond this model is to do away with chauvinistic nationalism, mainly brought about by considering literature in the light of linguistic or 'political boundaries.' Despite difference in language and culture, all nations have certain things in common. Hence, as Bassnett sums it up, "the American perspective on comparative literature was based from the start on ideas of interdisciplinarity and universalism."(48) Furthermore, this perspective threw over another basic principle of the French School, namely binary study, in regarding that the study of affinities and differences between two international literatures was just one angle of the subject, and that, as Gayley proposed, "the study of a single literature may be just as scientifically comparative literature if it seeks the reason and law of the literature in the psychology of the race or of humanity." (49)

The attitude of early scholars towards comparative literature was quintessentially humanistic. Posnett, Galey's contemporary, linked the subject to "the social evolution, individual evolution, and the influence of the environment on the social and individual life of man." (50) In this way, the influences between international literat-

ures are ignored and an emphasis is placed on humanity's collective achievements through time and place and across disciplinary lines - a view which seems to break down the barriers drawn by the French School between the interrelated elements of one single subject, which is literature. Arthur Richmond Marsh's definition of the subject was distinctive in relating it to pure literary criticism rather than to history.(51)

Paying no attention to the influence principle in comparative literature and relating literature to science and art creates new fields of study different from those of the French School. Most significant among these are 'parallelism' and 'intertextuality.'

(1) The 'Parallelism' Theory:

The Egyptian-born American critic Ihab Hassan has severely criticized the comparative literary study based on the principle of 'influence,' believing it to be inaccurate and ambiguous. He maintains that the impact of Rousseau or Byron, for instance, on the various Romantic attitudes in late 19th century Europe is in fact not based on the presumed idea of literary influence or imitation, but rather on more than one factor. Above all, the circumstances surrounding both the 'influencing' and 'influenced' writers were similar. In the second, there was an urgent need in different parts of the world for revolutionary reactions against the rigid, restrictive rules

of Classicism in literature. There would be no room therefore for Goethe's story *Die Lieden des Jungen Werthers* or Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, as examples, in foreign countries, if people were not prepared (mentally or culturally) for absorbing all these works' ideas, philosophies or concepts. These factors have prompted Ihab Hassan, and other American critics, to suggest 'parallelism' as an alternative to the theory of 'influence' in comparative literature. (52)

The 'Parallel' theory has been adopted by many comparatists in America and Eastern Europe. Konrad, a Russian comparatist, sees that this theory is derived from the idea of similarities in humanity's social and historical evolution, which means harmony in the process of literary development. Any study of parallelism claims that there are affinities between the literatures of different peoples whose social evolution is similar, regardless of whether or not there is any mutual influence or direct relation between them. To give an example, political and social relations during the feudal period resulted in similar patterns of thought, art and literature in different parts of the world. (53) Beyond study, the comparatist seeks to determine the bases and premises which underline common features between literatures and writers, or the affiliation of a phenomenon with a specific pattern. Although this theory is opposed by some critics, on the account that literatures differ according to their discovering national and historical backgrounds, it is

significant in the common properties of literary phenomena, whether related or not, and the national and historical attributes of each phenomenon.

(2) The 'Intertextuality' Theory:

'Intertextuality' simply means the reference of a text to another. But the term has been elaborated upon at length. M. Enani defines it as the relation between two or more texts at a level which affects the way or ways of reading the new text (the 'intertext,' allowing into its own contexture implications, echoes or influences of other texts). (54) A deeper analysis shows the phenomenon to be a melting-pot into which designated components of the influencing text (or 'hypotext,' as Gennette calls it) are intermixed with the content of the influenced text (hyper-text). This involves the phenomenon with what is so-called 'transtextuality', across textuality. (55) Roland Barthes takes the same position in looking upon the text as a 'network'. In interpreting the text the author is no longer 'the great originator' or 'the creative genius,' but as someone whose task is to put together in a certain literary form and structural pattern 'linguistic raw materials.' (56) Literature in this way is no more or less than a reworking of frequently-dealt-with materials, with a certain amount of change. The story of *Oedipus*, the quest for the Holy Grail, *King Solomon's Mines*, *The Waste Land*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Don Quixote*, and several other stories and themes, are all indicative of "the ways in which a

particular story or myth can be repeated in different ways." [57] This view may be adopted from the idea that "a writing surface [is like] a wax tablet on which the original has been partially or wholly reworked, written over success-fully."[58]

As critical appraisals of any phenomenon are (in)famous for yielding variant views, 'intertextuality,' too, is made to imply further meanings. Without referring directly to the phenomenon, Bakhtin has hinted at the overlapping of textual forms in the novel upon which both Julia Kristeva (who originated the term) and R. Barthes have relied in their approaches to 'intertextuality'. In the preamble of his book *Desire in Language* (trans. by Kristeva) Leon S. Roudiz refutes the idea of 'influence' between two writers and the sources of a literary work, and takes 'intertextuality' to be "a mutual exchange of the sign system between texts," which means the use of one stylistic system in lieu of another. [59]

Despite variation, the approaches to the phenomenon may meet at an essential point, namely that all the literary ingredients ("Bits of codes, formulae, rhythmic models, fragments of social languages, etc.") [60] drawn from other familiar works into a text are modulated in different ways to serve the writer's literary goal beyond it. A writer may try to blend another text into his own, yet the alignment between the two texts can never be entirely broken: there is always another text that strives to exist

under the 'hypertext.' Noticing this, Enani urges "the reader or the writer (or both)... to refer strongly to the other text for an understanding of the new one ..." [61] But this is exemplified at length: "Eliot published a set of explanatory notes with *The Waste Land* which locate it in frames of reference external to the text of the poem;" [62] many critical discourses about Joyce's *Ulysses* have related the novel to the narrative works of which certain aspects are mixed with its content; and Anne Muller's "Flaubert's Salammbô: Exotic Text and Inter Text" is a study which reveals the exotic morphemes used in *Salammbô* to stand as variants for familiar ones in *Madame Bovary*. For example, the use of 'Zaimph' (an out of use word meaning 'gown') in the place of these frequent signifiers: 'voile,' 'manteau,' 'vêtement' or 'robe' "generates a description in two codes, sacred and vestmentary, motivated respectively by its metonymic relationship with the goddess – therefore sacred object – and its capacity as article of clothing." [63]

The ways of reading or interpreting the literary text expand the province of 'intertextuality': each critic or individual reader takes a certain position, which is of course associated with his or her culture, language and experience, from the text. Since literary forms and human experience are known for their recurring change throughout history, the text then becomes susceptible to various interpretations or readings. This is stressed in Antony Easthope's view that "the text has an identity, but

that identity is always relational." [(64)] In one sense, the text is traversed again and again by various readers or critics across time and place. Evidence of this is the innumerable different approaches to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, from the moment it appeared till now.

Enani, as a well-versed translator of many English works into Arabic and vice versa, gives room for 'intertextuality' in the process of translation. In translating a text the translator is often tempted to refer the idioms and expressions of the original text to their equivalents in the target culture. Inasmuch as this may 'violate' the original, it gives rise to a new text, still related to the original. Enani creates a professed case of 'intertextuality' in his *Comparative Moments* through a comparison between Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* (by quoting certain parts from each one) and their literary translations by Lewis Awad. Nabil Raghib and M. S. Farid. Though Eliot's poem has a dynamic intertextuality with Shakespeare's plays (as Eliot uses, for example, 'chair' in the place of 'barge' and 'marble' instead of 'water,' with regard to the connotation of words, to convey his idea of the loss of the glorious past and of love), Awad's translation of these two texts from English into Arabic creates a case of 'intertextuality' as well. Awad's choice of الكرسي (al-kursi) and الشراع (al-shira') for both 'chair' and 'barge' and العرش الوضاء(al-arsh el-wadda') for 'a burnished throne' (an image maintained in both the Qurän and the Bible) gives

The phenomenon becomes more complex as literary texts come to refer to arts (music, painting, sculpture), applied sciences (mathematics, engineering), natural sciences (physics, chemistry), religion, cinema, and so on. Michael Holquist asserts that comparative literature's development as a discipline in the twentieth century has affected other academic disciplines in most of Europe. (66) Literature, in a sense, resembles a body of water on whose surface are reflected various forms of knowledge. Michelle E. Bloom's dissertation hypothesizes that "the physical properties of wax constitute a useful conceptual framework for reading wax fictions and other texts." (67) The definition of 'wax fiction' centers on the idea of "dissolution," with regard to "several figurative senses, especially psychological (insanity) and discursive (narrative incoherence)." (68) As 'wax' can be turned into solid and liquid, this process is suggested as a 'paradigm' for literary movements in fact of their rise and decline. Bloom shows that Shaw's *Pygmalion* (based on Ovid's myth of making a female creature out of a statue) is a paradigm of many modern wax fictions such as: Champfleury's "L' Homme aux Figures de Cire," Balzac's "Le Chef-d'oeuvre Inconnu," E.T. Hoffmann's "Der Sandmann" and many such narratives in which statues assume life. This wax case is also used in the cinema,

such as in the "Hollywood horror films" of the 1930s. [69] The dissertation ends with stating that though the progress of technology in the last few decades has caused, for instance, 'robots' to supplant wax figures, the wax museums are still relied upon in substantiating "human desires and fantasies." [70] Zola's *Le Docteur Pascal* is argued to be related to Darwin's "theory of heredity" and H. James' *The Turn of the Screw* to "the stream of consciousness (experimental psychology)." [71] On the contrary, Viviane Casimir (in "Savoir as a New Space of Communication: Emile Zola and Henry James," a Ph. D. dissertation) challenges the view of the impact of science upon literature, rendering it to just a "cultural receptacle," by proposing that the two fields communicate in sharing "common modes of thinking" ('Savoir')" to create particular models, themes or paradigms. [72] This turns intertextuality between science and literature to "interdiscursivity." It is on this ground that *Le Doctreur Pascal* (which "problematizes the "living" through the question of similarity)" is put in relation to "natural history/biology," while *The Turn of the Screw* (questioning "the truth as a process of seeing)" is related to "pragmatism." [73]

In conclusion, the American School of comparative literature, though largely welcomed in different parts of the world, has not escaped criticism. To start with, it confuses 'comparative' with 'general' literature on the ground that both are involved with studying one subject

(literature). The determination of comparative literature's boundaries is marked by 'duality' in relating literature to other arts and sciences - a duality which makes the subject's province too vast to investigate and come up with accurate conclusions. The final and most serious fault is the failure of the American comparatists to avoid the problem of rabid nationalism, which has marked the French School and which they have intensely opposed, as they have shown in considering their literature superior to all others. (74)

IV

Comparative Literature Beyond the Euro-American Frontiers

Outside the boundaries of the Euro-American Schools, comparative literature has been debated at length. Consequently, more elaborated concept and other alternatives have appeared. The founding father of the subject in Russia, Veselovsky, has manifested in his academic studies an inclination towards the American School in judging the affinities between different literatures as a sign of resemblance in the general process of human psychology. (75) Agreeing with Veselovsky, the prominent comparatist Zhirmunsky has placed emphasis in the comparison not only on the processes of 'influence' and 'borrowing,' but also on the similitudes and dissimilitudes between literary phenomena and their analysis on historical grounds. Nonetheless, Konrad has disagreed with him on the French School's principle of influence, seeing it as just a way of keeping European literatures on top of all others.(76) Accordingly, he has opted for "mutual relation and influence" and "literary relation" as alternatives to "comparative literature," but they could not supplant it due to its firm establishment in Russia and the world. Perkov has wondered about the vague use of the term 'comparison': does it mean tracing the quality and quantity of differences between literatures, so as to show which is bigger or better? (77)

In a series of seminars on comparative literature, organized by the World Literature Institute in Moscow, some of the Russian comparatists have attacked what they have described as the 'formalism of the West.' In a paper on western perspectives on comparative literature, Neupokoeva has criticized the American method of criticism as being unfair in treating the text's ideology by regarding the text as an independent entity. She has also launched a no less severe criticism on the American perspective's disregard for the linguistic boundary in comparative studies, which is tantamount to ignoring geographical borders between literatures and cultural specificity. (78)

Comparative literature studies in Eastern Europe in the last three decades of the twentieth century have seen the subject evolve, in spite of differences of opinion between one study and another. For example, the Roman academician Dima has exhibited his inclination towards the French School in reconfirming the boundary of language in comparative studies and in distinguishing between "general" and "comparative" literature. (79) However, he has disavowed this statement in suggesting that there is an area of comparison between literatures of one language. (80) Finally, he has shown to take a stance between the French and American school as he stresses the independence of "comparative literature" (whose aims are figured in direct influences, borrowing and topo-

logical affinities) and the interrelation between critical and historical social studies of literary phenomena in comparative literature study.

But in Czechoslovakia the American perspective has found a huge following. Most famous among Czech comparatists is Durshin, who has stated that "comparative literature," "history of literature" and "theory of literature" are interwoven in any objective literary comparison, though each one has its own properties. Durshin has eschewed the heated polemics raised, needlessly, about definitions of the term "comparative literature," the reason for which he ascribes to the subject's confinement to the principle of influence. (81) In an avoidance of this problem Durshin refers the reader to two dimensions of the comparative literary study, namely: "literary relations" and "parallelism" between literatures – dimensions which represent external relations, different from the internal relations, represented in the reaction of a text to certain literary phenomena in other texts. (82)

In the 1970s many critics attempted to rid the comparative literary study of all its problematic aspects (historical, political or methodological). In his essay "The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature" (published in *Discriminations* in 1970), Rene Wellek saw it essentially important for the comparatist to limit his study to the literary text or texts, disregarding external factors. He maintained that the three components of "literary

study - history, theory and criticism - involve each other..." [83] The reference to history in this respect is not related to the term in its broader sense but to a particular kind, namely "cultural history." This gave rise to "new Historicism in North American Criticism in the 1970s and 1980s." [84] The conferences of the International Society of Comparative Literature in Belgrade in the 1970s led to the chronicling of European literature on the basis that it comprised 'sub-national' literatures sharing certain common historical and literary traditions - an enterprise which they anticipated could be applied to other literatures (Asian, African, American, Indian... etc.). But such a general categorization of world literatures was regarded by the non-European scholars as arbitrary and questionable. For instance, the theory claiming so-called 'European Literature' is based on a common literary movement that originated within the geographical boundaries of the continent of Europe, will not work, for the roots of this literature are traced back to Homer's literary abilities in Asia. It deserves to be mentioned that Homer is a famous ancient Greek poet who wrote *The Iliad* and *Odyssey,* two epics which some of their episodes take place in Asia. But European literature is very different from Asian or African literature models not only on the basis of geographical boundaries, but also by virtue of possessing similar historical conditions, cultural and spiritual traits. [85]

In the regions which were colonized by Europe (such as India and Africa) the European "formalist approach" is entirely rejected and comparative literary study highlights "the politicization of literature." Swapan Majumdar, an Indian critic, is rigorously against the European historicity of world literatures for several reasons. Indian literature, for example, is composed of ethologically variable "sub-national literatures" that cannot be taken collectively, as is the case with European literatures which are bound together by a common ethos. It is on these grounds, Majumdar proposes, that "the comparison should take place not across individual boundaries, but on a larger scale altogether," that is, it is not right to compare Indian literature with an individual European literature (French, Italian, or German) but with the conception of all European literatures under the general heading "European" or "Western" literature. (86) The latter, in this way, paves the way for a serious reconsideration of "the old models that placed component literatures of the Western tradition in a position of international superiority." (87)

Indian, African, Asian as well as Latin American critics refuse to accept European "critical tools" in their countries, as "it is illogical and dangerous to obtrude European conceptions upon non-European visions of the world." (88) European critics looked down on, for example, the Indian and African literatures because of their being products of lower nations, colonized by Europe. In this

power was an absolute touchstone for evaluating literatures. Apropos of Euro-centrism, Sri Aurobindo ironically supposes that if the Indians colonized Europe, they would then gauge the European literary works (starting with the *Iliad* and *The Divine Comedy* through the plays of Shakespeare and the Spanish works up to the modern French poetry and fiction) as "a mass of bad ethics and violent horrors... a succession of bald and tawdry rhetorical exercises... a tainted and immoral thing." [(89)] It is hardly surprising, after all this, to observe the Indian comparatists focusing their attention on re-examining Indian literary fortunes across time and history and testing them against the European models, with the primary intention of regaining the solid bases of native culture and literary tradition, which found their various ways into Europe. Comparative literature study in India (as in Asia, Africa and Latin America) is directed "to start with the home culture and to look outwards, rather than to start with the European model of literary excellence and to look inwards."[(90)] This trend prepared for the emergence of the Indian Comparative Literature Association in 1981, whose primary goal was to prove the grandeur of the Indian literary and cultural heritage in all times and histories. With equal interest and fervor, African scholars have taken up arms against the so-called literary and cultural influence of Europe on Africa, as stressed in many a comparative literary study. Chidi Amuta sees the latter as "one of the ruses in the trick bag of those critics who see European culture as having had a

civilizing impact on 'primitive' African writing." [91] Amuta also agrees with Chinua Achebe's 1975 term 'universalism,' which European critics have tried to disseminate in different parts of the world within the last few years, "as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe." [92]

The process of re-examining European literary models in India or Africa during the post-colonial period has created the need for translating these models. But translation comes face-to-face with the problem of "interculturality" (which Enani defines as the translator's opting for "a word, a construction, an idiom which must refer the reader to his or her own literary tradition, and whose significance cannot be grasped except through his or her own culture"), [93] particularly when translation is not accurate or honest. It is most likely then that the translated text becomes open to various readings or interpretations, which cannot lead to any accurate judgment on the original text.

In a kind of reaction, perhaps, against spending too much time and effort on arguing about obsolete methods of comparative literature, Western comparatists have started to concern themselves primarily with studying and developing 'literary theory' in the 1990s. Consequently, a post-European model of comparative literature has come into being in other parts of the world. This model is described as "dynamic," in that it "can effectively be

compared to the earliest appearance of the subject in revolutionary Europe in the early nineteenth century." [94] Paying no attention to "the historicity of the American School and of the formalist approach," the new model is set on reconsidering literary fortunes and histories (like translation) with a view to reconfirming "national literary and cultural identity." [95]

This discussion would not be complete without a mention of how the dissolution of the ex-Soviet Union has affected the evolution of comparative literature. In Britain, for example, the pendulum seems to be swinging between the French and American school. All the comparative studies which have been made in the Modern Languages departments evinced their propensity for the French tradition, while the ones made in English departments have favored the American approach. However, British comparatists have provided the object with a "genuine" method called "placing," which Siegbert Prawer simply defines as the placing "side by side" of many a literary text, artist or tradition, so as to compare them for reaching a full understanding of various cultures. A rich field for comparative literature is our increasing reliance upon the English translations, especially of texts written in classical languages (Latin or Greek) or in unfamiliar ones. [96] As translated texts are possibly made 'intercultural, 'comparative literature becomes indirectly involved with an old and unresolved key problem, which is the politicization of literature.

In conclusion, the long journey pursued so far in exploring the murky areas of comparative literature demonstrates the evolution of the subject's methodology or theory, which seems to take a straightforward direction (from 'influence' through 'parallelism' to 'juxtaposition' principles). But this journey ends where it begins. That is, the linear movement of comparative literature turns out to be cyclic: recent approaches to the subject have failed, despite many serious attempts, to free it from the political and national shackles with which the earliest approaches began. Thus we come back to the field of corroborating the national identity in literature, particularly in the post-colonial world, moving thereby far away from the desired 'universalism,' or that 'universalism' sought by those who were, from the start, at variance with the concept and methodology of 'influence.'

Notes

(1) Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature*: *A Critical Introduction*, Oxford UK & Cambridge USA, Blackwell, 1993 (reprinted 1995), p. 1. See also, Lilian Furst, "Born to Compare," in Lionel Gossman and Mihai I. Spariosu (eds.), *Building a Profession: Autobiographical Perspectives on the Beginnings of Comparative Literature in the United States*, Albany, SUNY P., 1994; Paul Hernadi, "What Isn't Comparative Literature?," in *Profession* 86 (1986), PP. 22-24; Margaret R. Higonnet (ed.), *Borderwork: Feminist Engagements with Comparative Literature*, Ithaca, Cornell Univ. Press, 1994; Michael Holquist, "A New Tour of Babel: Recent Trends Linking Comparative Literature Departments, Foreign Language Departments, and Area Studies Programs," *ADFL Bulletin, Special Issue*, "Foreign Languages, International Studies, and Interdisciplinarity," 27.1 (1995), PP. 6-12; Michael Palencia-Roth, "Contrastive Literature," in *Comparative Literature in the Nineties: A Special Issue of the ACLA Bulletin*, 24.2 (1993), PP. 47 - 60; Eva Mendgen (ed.), *In Perfect Harmony: Picture and Frame 1850- 1920*, Amsterdam, Van Gogh Museum [Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders], 1995.

(2) See Robert J. Clements, *Comparative Literature as Academic Discipline*, New York, Modern Language Association of America, 1978, p. 2, where it is mentioned that the 'Babylonian' and 'Hellenistic' comparative literary studies took place in the ancient times and showed diverse endeavors in paralleling between different mythological and religious literatures; وانظر أيضا، محمد غنيمى هلال، *الأدب المقارن*، ط٣ ، مطبعة نهضة مصر، ١٩٧٧م. where it is referred to a number of comparative studies during the Middle Ages, the Renaissance period, the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; F. Schlegel, *Geschichte der alten und neun literatur*, Viena, 1812, which gave a panoramic portrait of world literature from the ancient times to the nineteenth century; his brother August W. Schlegel also drew the German reader's attention towards the works of Shakespeare, the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese poetry of the time; and being an advocate of 'Romanticism,' Mme de Stael acquainted the French reader with the German culture under the clash between 'Classicism' and 'Romanticism' trends in her book about Germany, entitled De L' Allemagne, Paris, 1810, and was published in Britain 1813.

Many controversies have been raised about the first uses of the term 'comparative literature, and

its muddling definitions in the nineteenth-century Europe in these references: René Wellek, 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature', in *Concepts of Criticism*, New Haven & London, Yale Univ. Press, 1963; Benedetto Croce, 'Comparative Literature,' in Hans Joachim Schultz & Phillip H. Rhein (eds.), *Comparative Literature: The Early Years*, Chapel Hill, Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1973; Henry Gifford, *Comparative Literature*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969; Ulrich Weisstein *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory* Bloomington & London, Indiana U.P., 1973; René Wellek, 'The Name and Nature of Comparative Literature', in *Discriminations*, New Haven & London, Yale Univ. Press, 1970; Siegbert Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction*, London, Duckworth, 1973; Hutcheson Macaulay Posnett, *The Science of Comparative Literature*, London, 1886; and P. Van Tieghem, *La Litterature Comparée*, Paris, 1951 1951.

(3) Susan Bassnett, p. 2.

(4) See C. L. Wrenn, *The Idea of Comparative Literature*, pamphlet published by the Modern Humanities Research Association, 1968; Philip D. Curton (ed.), *Imperialism*: *The Documentary History of Western Civilization*, NY, Walker & Col., 1971, p. 190; Maher Shafiq (trans.), the Abstract of *Fusul*, *Journal of Literary Criticism*,

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(٥) فان تيجم، *الأدب المقارن*، ترجمة سامي الدروبى، دار الفكرالعربي ، سنة الإصدار غير موجودة، ص٦٢، وانظر كذلك، ماريو فرانسوا جويار، *الأدب المقارن*، ترجمة محمد غلاب ومراجعة عبد الحليم محمود، القاهرة، ١٩٥٦ م، ص٥.

(٦) المرجع السابق، مقدمة كاريه، ص(j).

(7) Susan Bassnett, p. 28.

(8) Paul Van Tieghem, *La Litterature Comparée*, Paris, Colin, 1931, p. 57 (Cited in English in U. Weisstein, 1973, p. 4).

(٩) مجلة *فصول*، ١٩٨٣ م، ص١٢.وانظر فان تيجم، *الأدب المقارن*، ص١٦١-١٦٦.

(١٠) المرجع السابق، نفس الصفحة. وانظر أيضا: Henry Remak, 'Comparative Literature', in Newton Stallknecht & Horst Frenz (eds), *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Press, 1961. وانظر: ريمون طحان، *الأدب المقارن والأدب العام* دار الكتاب اللبناني، بيروت، ١٩٧٢ م، ص٩١-١٠٧.

(11) M. M. Enani, *The Comparative Tone: Essays in Comparative Literature*, Cairo, GEBO, 1995 p. 210.

(١٢) انظر: مجـدي وهبة، *الأدب المقارن*، لونجمـان، القـاهرة، ١٩٦١ م.، ص٣٩- ٤٢. وانظر أيضا: بديع محمود جمعة، *دراسات في الأدب المقـارن*، دار النهـضة العـربية للنشـر والطباعة، ط٢، بيروت، ١٩٨٠ م، ص١٣.

(13) *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language*, 1996 edition.

(14) See René Wellek, 'The Crisis of Comparative Literature', in *Concepts of Criticism*, pp. 282-6; Susan Bassnet, p. 29.

(١٥) احمد شوقي رضوان، *مدخل إلى الدرس الأدبي المقارن*، دار العلوم العربية للطباعة والنشر، بيروت، ١٩٩٠ م، ص٠٣٨

(١٦) مجدي وهبة، *الأدب المقارن*، ص١٥.

(١٧) المرجع السابق، ص١٦.

(١٨) فان تيجم، *الأدب المقارن*، ص١٣٣-١٣٤.

(١٩) نفس المرجع السابق، ص١٣٩-١٤٠. وانظر كذلك، سمير سرحان، "مفـهوم التأثيـر في الأدب المقـارن، " مجلة فصـول، ١٩٨٣ م، ص٣١.

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(٢٢) المرجع السابق، ص٢٦.
(٢٣) نفس الصفحة السابقة.
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(٢٦) أولريش ڤايشتاين، "التأثير و التقليـد،" ترجمة مصطفى ماهر، مجلة فصول، ١٩٨٣ م، ص١٩.
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(٢٨) المرجع السابق، ص١٩.

(29) See A. Owen Aldridge (ed.), *Comparative Literature: Matter and Method*, London, 1969; J. Shaw, "Literary Indebtedness and Comparative Literature", in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, p. 61.

(٣٠) محمد غنيمي هلال، *النماذج الإنسانية في الدراسات الأدبية المقارنة*، دار نهضة مصر للطباعة و النشر، القاهرة، د. ت. ص٨٤-٨٦.
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(35) See Pierre Reboul, *Le Mythe Anglais dans la Litterature Francaise Sous la Restauration*, Lille, 1962.

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(37) *Islamic and Arab Contribution to the European Renaissance*, by the National Commission for UNESCO at Egypt, General Egyptian Book Organization (GEBO), 1977, p. 20.

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(٤٤) سمير سرحان، مجلة*فصول*، ص٢٩.

(45) Susan Bassnett, p. 30.
(46)Henry Remak, 'Comparative Literature: Its Definition and Function', in Newton Stallknecht and H. Frenz (eds.), *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective*, p. 3. See also Susan Bassnett, p. 31.
(47) See Charles Mills Gayley, "What is Comparative Literature?", in *The Atlantic Monthly* (92), 1903, pp. 56-68.
(48) Susan Bassnett, p. 33.

(49) Charles Mills Gayley, p. 102.
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(62) Webster, *Studying Literary Theory*, p. *101.*

(63) *Alif,* Journal of Comparative Poetics, No. 4, The American Univ. in Cairo (Spring 1984), pp. 20-1.

(64) Antony Easthope, "Literature, History, and the Materiality of the Text," in *Literature and History*, Vol. 91 (Spring 1983), p. 28; Tony Bennett, "Text, Readers, Reading Formations," in *Literature and History*, Vol. 9: 2 (Aut. 1983), p. 216; Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London, Tavistock, 1972, p. 23; John Frow, *Marxism and Literary History*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986.

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(95) Loc. Cit.
(96) Siegbert Prawer, *Comparative Literary Studies: An Introduction*, p. 102.

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